

Sports Opinion



Darren Ivy

## Nebraska home for Canadians

Growing up in a country where Monday night is National Hockey Night, almost all children in Canada are introduced to the sport at an early age.

"Everybody plays hockey," said Mike Corniffe, a Canadian sprinter on the NU track team.

With hockey in the national spotlight, other sports such as football, soccer and track don't have near the same player, fan or financial appeal.

In Canada, collegiate athletic scholarships and financial support to youth programs aren't there, but athletes haven't gotten discouraged.

So many of these athletes head to the United States where they are given athletic scholarships and good training facilities.

"There is a world of talent waiting to be discovered (in Canada), and Nebraska has found it," Corniffe said.

Nebraska's latest diamonds in the rough are Dahrnan Diedrick, a 6-foot-1 210-pound I-back, and Kevin Grant, a track-and-field jumper. Both athletes enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this semester.

Even though Diedrick is now a Cornhusker, he won't forget his roots.

"I am playing for my country down here," Diedrick said. "Football is football no matter where you go, and I want people to know there are good football players in Canada."

While Diedrick is the Huskers' first-ever Canadian football recruit, he doesn't have to look far to find other Canadian Cornhuskers. There are at least 14 Canadians at UNL competing in swimming, gymnastics, track and field and soccer.

Husker teams benefit from many of the athletes' Canadian experience, while the athletes prosper at NU's state-of-the-art facilities.

Soccer heads the list with seven players and two coaches from Canada. Gymnastics, track and swimming have two Canadians, and the football team now has one.

Having other Canadians on the soccer team was one reason Amy Walsh, a sophomore from Saint Bruno, Quebec, transferred to NU—but she still misses her home.

"I am a Cornhusker, but I will always be a Canadian," Walsh said. "I learned the words (to 'The Star-Spangled' banner) so I could mouth them, but I am patriotic and have a Canadian flag on my wall."

If Canadian athletes continue to migrate to UNL, we may have to follow "The Star-Spangled Banner" with "O Canada" rather than "Alma Mater."

Darren Ivy is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan assignment reporter and copy editor.



MATT MILLER/DN

**NEBRASKA I-BACK** DeAngelo Evans has been building back his strength using a program designed by NU Gymnastics Coach Francis Allen and NU Head Athletic Trainer Doak Ostergard. Evans, from Wichita, Kan., injured his groin in 1996.

## Evans pushes on

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Senior Reporter

A single drop of sweat glimmered on DeAngelo Evans' jaw line, then slowly slid across his cheek and up his forehead before gliding off and hitting the blue mat underneath him.

His sweat-soaked T-shirt clung to his body, which shook as he tried to hold a handstand for the one-minute goal determined by Nebraska football team trainer Doak Ostergard.

Evans squeezed his eyes shut and held his breath as his legs began to shake against the blue mat on the wall of the gymnastics room at the Bob Devaney Sports Center—a place Evans has come to know well this semester.

"Keep going," Ostergard said. But Evans' legs kicked forward, falling to the mat below him as he attempted to catch his breath.

"How long?" Evans said. "Forty-five seconds," Ostergard said.

Evans sighed as he focused on the mat in front of him.

"I just want to work my hardest, and I don't want to have a bad attitude."

DEANGELO EVANS  
NU I-back

He shook his head.

"I'm so weak," Evans said.

Afternoons like this aren't easy for Evans, an I-back on the Nebraska football team who rushed for 776 yards and a team-leading 14 touchdowns as a freshman in 1996.

But his on-field accomplishments now seem like distant memories to the 5-foot-9 sophomore.

His troubles started two years ago when Evans suffered a rare stress injury to his pelvis that became aggravated over time.

Evans, from Wichita, Kan., underwent surgery in Boston last summer in hopes of returning for what would have been his sophomore season.

But after lingering soreness in

his adductor muscles led to a failed comeback attempt, Evans redshirted during NU's 1997 national championship season and had a second surgery in October.

"He made good progress when he came back from Boston," Ostergard said. "He was running straight ahead pretty well. But the soreness never got better like we thought it would."

Now, instead of participating in the Cornhuskers' winter conditioning, Evans works every weekday afternoon at the Devaney Center on regaining the strength he lost over the past four months.

He doesn't lift weights. Evans follows a program of gymnastic exercises devised in part by

Please see EVANS on 8

## NU yet to reach potential

Women's Basketball

Texas vs. Nebraska  
Today, 7:05 p.m.  
at Bob Devaney Sports Center

BY DARREN IVY  
Staff Reporter

Coach Paul Sanderford doesn't like to concentrate on the past.

"My teams historically have played well in February and March, and I certainly hope this team plays its best basketball in February and March," said Sanderford, the Nebraska women's basketball coach. "We definitely haven't peaked yet."

Sanderford said he hopes lineup changes in tonight's 7:05 game with Texas will get Nebraska primed for the stretch run.

Injuries are one reason the Cornhuskers (13-5 overall and 3-3 in the Big 12 Conference) haven't hit their potential. But Sanderford isn't interested in excuses.

"It's that time of year where we've got to wake some people up and give some other players a chance to play more minutes," Sanderford said.

NU senior forward Jami Kubik said the Huskers have worked with different player combinations in practice and said she didn't think it would be much different in the game.

"It might be a different lineup initially, but pretty much the same players will be coming into the rotation," Kubik said.

Sanderford was disappointed after NU's 76-71 loss to Baylor because he felt it was a game NU should have won. The Huskers, who are ranked 23rd in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches' poll, fell out of The Associated Press Poll released Monday.

"It's been a long week since we played at Baylor," Sanderford said. "I'm looking forward to playing Texas."

Although the Longhorns (6-9 and 2-4) have struggled, Sanderford said UT always has a strong winning tradition.

"I hope they don't turn it around against us," Sanderford said. "It's still scary to me that they aren't playing better than they are."

"We will have to be at our best."

## NU looks for Cat court win

BY ANDREW SPINALE  
Staff Reporter

A trip to Manhattan, Kan., and a visit by the fifth-ranked team in the nation. That's what the Nebraska men's basketball team has in store this week.

With a win at Kansas State tonight at 7:05, the Cornhuskers (13-6 overall and 4-2 in the Big 12 Conference) will be off to their best conference start since 1981-82. But it won't be an easy chore.

The Wildcats (12-5 and 2-4) are 9-0 at the Bramlage Coliseum and have defeated the Huskers in Manhattan each of the past three seasons.

NU Coach Danny Nee said the

Men's Basketball

Wildcats have improved remarkably since last season. Kansas State finished 10-17 and 3-13 in league play.

The Wildcats shot just 37 percent from the floor during conference play and only topped the 70-point mark twice.

"You talk about a turnaround team from a year ago," Nee said. "I really think they are a quality team. Number one, Manny Dies might be the most improved player in the league, and he's playing right now at close to all-conference status."

Dies, a 6-foot-8 junior forward,

leads the Wildcats in scoring, averaging more than 16 points per game. Nee said Dies has the ability to finish and play physical against any team in the league.

Winning on the road, historically, is not easy in college basketball. Nebraska is 1-2 away from the Bob Devaney Sports Center in Big 12 play and will look for its first win in Manhattan since Feb. 9, 1994.

Junior guard Tyronn Lue believes the recent woes in Manhattan stem from a lack of focus by the entire team.

"Last year, we knew it was a big game for us, and they weren't playing so well," Lue said. "We thought we could walk all over them, and they beat us."

Despite their road woes, Nee said, the Huskers have played well

"We thought we could walk all over them, and they beat us."

TYRONN LUE  
NU point guard

both at home and on the road.

NU will return to Lincoln to host Kansas Sunday at 2:30 p.m. The game will be televised on ABC.